Import of wheat

2660. SHRJ S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government resorted to import wheat during 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details indicating tenders floated, agencies of Government involved, comparison of bids received and the final prices accepted and quantities imported;

(c) whether Government have been taking steps in the current year for further imports;

(d) if so, the details thereof indicating steps-wise proceedings thereof up-to-date;

(e) the details of quantity of wheat already contracted for import and/or proposed to be imported, indicating details of exporters chosen and the comparative f.o.b. and f.o.c. prices in USD offered by them; and

(f) the rationale behind the steps taken in 2007-08?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Wheat prices

2661. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether domestic wheat prices are likely to flare up in line with soaring wheat prices in global markets;

(b) whether India entered the world wheat market for contracting its imports at a time when global wheat prices in US hit a high for the last decade; and

(c) whether country has to wait till winter 2007 for enough Australian wheat to be made available for export after its harvest at stabilised prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The import of wheat is for Central Pool. Since the procurement fell short by about 40 lakh tonnes it was decided by the Government to import wheat in order to ensure food security of the country and cater to the requirements of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Welfare Schemes etc.

Even though the international prices of wheat have gone up substantially the domestic prices have not increased. Retail prices have remained steady at Rs. 12 per Kg. in Delhi for the last six months. The whole sale price which was Rs. 1030 per Quintal six month back was Rs. 1025 per Quintal on 15.8.2007. The level of prices of commodities is determined largely by a variety of factors operating on the demand and supply side. These include domestic production, arrivals in the market,